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in His works, to be found by those who will use their eyes and open their hearts, that they may understand the sign in which it is written. The Art of the Present is that which deals with the present—that of the past is dead—that of the future unborn. If the artist were what he should be, a reformer, a philanthropist, full of hope, and reverence, and love, he would be a man of his own times; if not, he may be what he pleases, there is not much for him to do. He may paint the past, fancy the future—anything but complain that Art is neglected and despised, since *his* Art is only a ghost or a phantasy—living men cannot grasp it or hold communion with it.

Reminiscences.

EXHIBITIONS AND ACADEMIES.

THE epoch of our annual exhibitions naturally suggests the recollection of the *first* artistic exposition in the United States, which took place in the memorable Hall of Independence, in May, 1795, under the direction of an ephemeral society with the quaint name of COLUMBIANUM. Their first document commences thus:—"An association of artists in America for the protection and encouragement of the Fine Arts. We, the undersigned, from an earnest desire to promote, to the utmost of our abilities, the Fine Arts, now in their infancy in America, mutually promise and agree to use our utmost efforts to establish a school or academy of architecture, sculpture, painting, &c., within the United States." Signed by thirty members, of whom fourteen were engravers and painters.

A small attempt was made to organize an Academy, by means of a number of broken statues, belonging to my father, saved from the wreck of his studio and the revolutionary movements. From these plasters, Jeremiah Paul and myself were the only draughtsmen; but a desire to study from the life promised a better attendance, and a fine athletic baker was chosen as a willing model; but, when we were all stationed at the surrounding desks, crayon in hand, and our young baker, though accustomed to some nudity in his bakery, found himself, as he stripped, the object of a dozen pair of scrutinizing eyes, he *hastily* gave up the display; and my father, that the young academicians should not be disappointed, partially disrobed himself, and thus served as the first academical model in America!

A great effort was made to get up an exhibition by contributions of old and new paintings, from Copley and West, down to the Peales, and landscapes by Loutherbourn and Groombridge. Four landscapes by Reinagle, were the chief ornaments of the walls, but were sent back to the artist, not finding a purchaser at a hundred dollars each, such was the low ebb of taste in the capital of America, with the boasted population of ninety thousand inhabitants—now 500,000. In the collection was a fine portrait of Mrs. Governor Mifflin, by Copley, for the hands of which, she told me, she sat twenty times. This tediousness of operation deterred many from sitting to

Copley. I have heard Vanderlyn fret that he could only get six sittings for the same purpose.

Philadelphia, then without a rival, imagined itself the Athens of America, but could scarcely support two portrait painters and one miniature painter. *Field* was only a bird of passage—went to Nova Scotia, adopted the surplice, and became a comfortable bishop; and the sculptor *Cerachi*, after making a bad bust of Washington, returned to France to conspire against Bonaparte. It may be worth remembering that the first enamel miniature painted in America was that of my father, and the second, William Bingham, painted by the elder *Birch*, who afterwards could only scrape a living by painting enamel breastpins for lady patrons; his son *Thomas*, until recently, enjoyed his humble life as a marine painter.

The erection of a new theatre triumphed in despite of the powerful opposition of Quakers, and was rendered attractive by a beautiful drop-scene, painted in London by Reinagle, the motto over the stage being, "We hold the *mirror* up to nature." The same taste dictated a motto for our exhibition, furnished by Joseph Hopkinson, "'Tis not in mortals to command success, but we'll do more—deserve it." Notwithstanding this, it was the only exhibition until the formation of the Pennsylvania Academy in 1805, of which I was the instigator and chief instrument, with much loss of money and time. The *Columbianum* died a natural death, by schisms, and chiefly the resignation, in a body, by eight of its members—Englishmen—occasioned by some republican sentiment uttered by an American. Indignant at this proceeding, I drew a caricature sketch of the retiring party; on submitting it to Mr. Trenchard, the engraver, he was amused with its point and humor, but recommended me to suppress it, with the kind advice never to indulge in satire so flattering to the vanity of the satirist, and so seldom productive of any good results. The satisfaction I have enjoyed from his benevolent advice is a sufficient excuse for presenting the anecdote to other artists. The hall, which had been neglected since the Declaration of Independence, after the exhibition, became my painting room. It is now renovated and consecrated by a gallery of American worthies, most of which were painted by my father—some by myself—and is daily visited with increasing veneration.

As connected with the subject of exhibitions and academies, I may be indulged in an episode to London, where, in 1802-3, I studied under the direction of Mr. West, who transferred to me the affection he had conceived for my father. After drawing from the antique in the Royal Academy, I was a candidate for admission to the life school; but a trick practiced on Mr. West deprived me of that favor. As a compensation, however, I united with other students, and procured the academy model for our private study; but we were obliged to discontinue it, from the mean idea of some of the academicians, that it was a species of opposition to them. Subsequently, under a more liberal construction, several private life academies have been established in London; and now in New York and Philadelphia, no difficulty is experienced in

procuring living models of men and women, whereas, in 1805, no female could be obtained here who would consent to serve before more than one artist. In Paris, I drew, with Vanderlyn, and another American, from one of the five models he employed to finish his beautiful picture of *Ariadne*. She reclined, with apparent composure, on her couch, until her breakfast was announced, when she rose, and covered herself with every indication of unaffected modesty, although our other American was angry that she could bear the scrutinizing gaze of three artists!

Among the sketches which decorated the gallery leading to Mr. West's painting room, I often admired the solemn grandeur of his *original* sketch of "Death on the Pale Horse," and could not forbear warmly praising it, with the hope that he would some day make a large picture from it. My commendations induced him to take this study with him to Paris, on his visit during the short peace of 1802, where it gained him great applause.

In 1803, when I was preparing to return to America, Mr. West made up his mind to embark with me, which induced me to remark, that although our country was too young adequately to remunerate him for his great historical works, yet by painting them, for *popular exhibition* in our different cities, I thought he might be fully compensated. Mild as was his temper, and pale his complexion, his countenance suddenly became flushed, and he replied—"I will thank you *never* to name that subject again!" His intention of coming to America was abandoned, by the advice of his physicians, who thought that the delicate health of Mr. West could not survive the shock of the voyage—and his picture of "Christ Healing the Sick," soon after, wrought a change in his sentiment. It was painted as a present to the Pennsylvania Hospital; but, before sending it off, he was induced to place it in the Exhibition of the British Institution, where it proved so attractive that the directors offered him the unprecedented price of three thousand guineas for it, which he thought it his duty to accept, and to paint a *repetition* of it, with some variations; which was done, and the hospital cleared twenty-five thousand dollars by its exhibition. These circumstances induced Mr. West to compose and execute in large his "Christ before Pilate," and to exhibit it on his own account. This having proved successful, he determined to paint his "Death on the Pale Horse;" but, unfortunately, instead of merely enlarging it, without alterations, he filled it up with new and odd conceits; and, painting it when his powers began to fail, disappointed every expectation, and lessened his reputation.

It was after this that Mr. Galt undertook to write the life of Mr. West—a work rendered ridiculous by the romantic and fabulous tales, gleaned from the family gossip. This same biographer had previously drawn himself into notice by affecting to patronize the Poet Bloomfield. When painting his portrait, I perceived that he was in delicate health, and learned from him that it was caused by close confinement at a desk, where his duty was to fill up papers for the imprisonment of unfortunate debtors (which also preyed upon his spirits) an office procured for him by Mr. Galt, and

yielding him only one hundred pounds, with expectations of promotion, which never came. I advised him to resign and return to his business as ladies' shoemaker. He was afraid of offending Mr. Galt, but I succeeded in getting him to resign and go out of town till his post was filled by another; and to afford him occupation in the country, I taught him the principles of perspective drawing; and thus had the satisfaction of having saved his life, without regard to Mr. Galt, who was afterwards to prey upon Mr. West.

In speaking of exhibitions, it may not be amiss to say, that when I was in Rome in 1830, I learned that the artists there would never consent to take the advice of their English friends, in the establishment of an annual exhibition, and their argument was very conclusive: "Now our studios are visited by amateurs of all nations, who become personally acquainted with us, and buy our pictures, which are shown to advantage on our easels. In a general and crowded exhibition this would not be the case, and we should be in a manner forgotten." Yet the students of the French and Russian schools had their separate annual display, from a motive of national pride. I was satisfied that the Roman artists were right, and could not help concluding that it *might* be the same in our country, notwithstanding whatever good may arise from our annual exhibition, if the *fashion* could be established for the amateurs of painting and sculpture to go the rounds of the studios, and at once stimulate and reward the artists. From such visitors Turner was more benefited than by his exhibitions at the Royal Academy.

And here I must mention an anecdote of our countryman COLE. In 1834 he had painted a fine picture of American scenery, which was placed in the academy under a bright yellow painting of the same size by Turner. Had Cole's picture occupied the brighter position of Turner's, and his been placed in the obscure light where Cole's was placed, the contrast would have been more favorable to both. I was grieved to witness the disappointment of the amiable Cole, during the forty-two tedious days of exhibition, during which his picture would have been better hidden at home. I called to see him the day after the exhibition closed, and found the picture on his easel at 9 o'clock, and the artist engaged writing invitations to his friends. They came to see his picture in a favorable light, and one of them bought it for 250 guineas.

REMBRANDT PEALE.

THE WILDERNESS AND ITS WATERS.*

CHAP. VIII.

UP STREAM.

It was not so easy to pull our boats up the river as we had found it to row down. The current between the rapids was tolerably strong, but the guides pulled cheerily, and, we helping what little we might with the paddles, we won our way up slowly, sometimes working with our utmost vigor for several minutes to gain a single foot. Our boatman, Moodie, had a song which he always struck up when he was rowing hard,

i. e., when he could spare breath to sing. It was only the first verse of a stanza, and ran in this wise:

"The ocean bird spreads his pinions of snow,"

and then it passed into an inarticulate hum for a space which might represent another verse or two, and then ceased for a moment, and then *da capo*. The air was one I had never heard before, rather quaint, and his voice, as Student said, was like a consolidation of bull-frog croaks, let out slowly at a high pressure. I heard it until I found myself perpetually whistling it to myself, and it finally became a bore, and I would have given anything to have got rid of it. In the moments of silence, as we became lost in thought, Moodie, turning his head sidewise, with his face downward, would open his song in an undertone at first, and brace up with renewed energy, his activity increasing with the opening of his voice, until he reached the maximum, when, after a short time of sustaining them, they would subside together. "Bill," said I, "what 'll you take for that song?" "Oh! it's no use of my selling it to you—you couldn't use it if I was to give it to you—it's only suited to my voice."

After a hard pull, we arrived at the foot of the rapids, and as we had left the heavier portions of the cargo in the camp where we had passed the night, we got out, and the guides carried the boats up by a path at the side of the river, and launched them in the river above, without much trouble. We prepared to go at fishing in earnest, as we had only cast here and there carelessly in going down. I was now more than ever surprised by Angler's casting. Taking his position on the edge of a flat rock where there were no bushes behind him to catch his flies, he cast in every direction, over every eddy and pool within one hundred feet, his fly falling with the most marvellous precision, and almost always being greeted by the whisk of the tail of some half-pound trout, or else being quietly accepted by some grave elder specimen, who, being led around among the rocks, and up the little cascades, came quietly to his feet, and was secured. Our flies would crack like a whip occasionally, but his made never a sound, and the curves which the line made were most gracefully drawn, as, cast backward, it described one ellipse, and then, thrown forward again, it passed by another, out nearly to a straight line, then falling gently, while the rod gathered up the slack, and the flies fell on the bit of water in which Angler fancied a trout lay. It was all done with so little effort, and so unfailingly, time after time, that it was really quite artistic. Before we had finished fishing, he was casting full an hundred feet of line.

We fished until dinner time, and then went back to the camp, too hungry to spend much time in cooking. We found the fire still mouldering, and the hut as cheerful as we could desire. The warm sun shone down through the broken roof, and as I cast myself on the boughs I could scarcely realize that it was the same place where I had passed the night before in chilly writhings and turnings, impatiently waiting the daylight. We cooked our fish *à la fourchette*, and having satisfied ourselves with that and dry bread, we loaded up the boats and set off again. A short distance

up we came suddenly on a loon who had, unfortunately for himself, wandered from the broad lake into the narrow water. I had previously desired to have one for the sake of some of his feathers, which are singularly marked in white and black, so that as we came in sight of him the guides dropped their oars and caught up their rifles, but of course before either could fire, he was under the water. They will sometimes dive far enough to get out of shot, but this seemed hardly possible in the narrow river, and the guides waited his rising with rifles raised. Presently the black head and neck appeared twenty-five or thirty rods above us, and after an instant's pause Moodie fired. We saw distinctly the splash of the ball as it glanced from the breast of the bird, and heard instantly after the sound of its striking. The loon of course disappeared, and we pulled up the river rapidly, in hopes to have a nearer shot, and when he rose he was within ten or fifteen rods. Before he could recover his surprise, Bill fired, and his neck settled down on the water quietly. We took him in, and I was really ashamed to have caused the death of so noble a bird in order to gratify my curiosity. He must have weighed a dozen pounds or more, and a heavy and close coat of feathers on the breast explained the failure of the first ball. The second had hit the neck near the body, and had gone through. We laid him out at length in the boat, and resumed our journey, determining to take the skin off when we landed.

We repassed the lake through which we had come the evening before, and a little distance higher up Bill led off to an opening in the hedge of maples along the river-bank, through which came the outlet of the lake we were to visit. It was a stream barely wide enough to use the oars in, and not more than two or three feet deep. It was fringed with rushes and arrow-head, and wound through a cranberry bog, which was, however, too yielding to permit a safe landing. We had soon to take to the paddles, and found the stream obstructed by fallen logs, which had been chopped away by former voyagers, so as to permit a boat to pass with difficulty. In several places we were obliged to use the axes, and widen the passage. The banks shut in on the stream presently, and became precipitous—sometimes twenty or thirty feet high, and crowned by tall pines, which almost met above the narrow cleft which the waters had made. The forest on each side was a tangled maze of trees of all kinds, in which no path had yet been made, except the runways of the deer, which here and there crossed the stream. Sometimes the water was so shallow that we were obliged to get out and walk by the side of the boat, pulling it along, and then again we must stoop to let the boat pass under a huge log which lay only a couple of feet above the water. So through a succession of "rafts" of drift-wood, wedged in together by the spring freshets, and fallen trees, with now and then a slight rapid, we worked along for a couple of miles, when the stream became wider and more tranquil, and was covered with pond-lilies, through which we rowed, catching up the lilies and their broad green leaves at every dip of the oars, plucking all the finer specimens that came within reach, until we were half buried in a fragrant cargo. Then we passed through a succes-

* Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by STILLMAN & DURAND, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.